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ABSTRACT

In seeking to define and describe culturally and linguistically different exceptional (CLDE) children, common problems in distinguishing a disability from a cultural or linguistic difference are discussed. The legal mandates affecting the assessment of CLDE students are summarized. An appropriate nondiscriminatory assessment process is defined in the context of the tester, the test, and the testee. Eight approaches to eliminating or reducing bias in testing limited-English proficient students are described: translation and/or adaptation of standardized tests, establishment of ethnic norms, creation of culture-fair tests, creation of culture-specific tests, J. Mercer's multipluralistic approach, task analysis approach, criterion-referenced tests, and a global approach to test bias. Common assessment practices as reported in several surveys (1977-1984) are noted. The global approach to test bias is discussed as being the approach best suited for CLDE students because of its emphasis on the process of evaluation. Among recommendations cited are the need to develop an effective system to collect, analyze, and disseminate data about linguistic minority children as an important first step in providing appropriate cross-cultural assessment. (JW)

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CHAPTER 2

A CRITICAL LOOK AT TESTING AND EVALUATION FROM A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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This paper attempts to define and describe the target population and discuss the common problems in distinguishing a "disability" from a cultural or linguistic difference. The legal mandates impacting on the assessment of linguistically and culturally different students are summarized. A brief summary and review of the research on the uses and misuses of standardized assessment instruments are presented; in addition, the most common approaches being practiced in the field of nondiscriminatory assessment are described and critically analyzed. Viable alternative nondiscriminatory assessment and evaluation techniques, approaches, and recommended model practices are recommended. Finally, recommendations in the area of cross-cultural assessment and evaluation will be made for local, state, and federal educators who are involved in either the development or policies or the implementation of services to culturally and linguistically different students who may or may not have exceptional needs.

WHO IS OUR TARGET POPULATION?

This paper focuses on a group of children identified as linguistically and culturally different, children who are native speakers of a language other than English. It includes both children from immigrant families and children from native-born American families who speak languages other than English. In defining this population, it must be remembered that in identifying a child as a member of a particular language group, one must not separate the language from the particular cultural context in which it is spoken. Different cultures may share a common language and yet vary greatly in cultural values: French-speaking children from Haiti, Canada, and France, for example, represent very different cultural and linguistic populations.

Therefore, although the term <u>linguistic minority student</u> refers to a student who is a native speaker of a language other than English, within this category there is wide diversity. The term may refer on one hand to

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those students of varying degrees of literacy who have just migrated with their families to the United States; to students who are living in the United States and learning both languages simultaneously; to second generation students who prefer to speak English at school and their native languages at home; and finally, to migrant children who may be represented in any of the above descriptions.

The term culturally and linguistically different exceptional children is defined as those individuals who exhibit discrepancies in growth and development due to health-related impairments, hearing impairments, mental retardation, orthopedic-related handicaps, serious emotional disturbances, learning disabilities, speech impairments, or visual impairments (Advisory Board of Access, 1981). The linguistic levels of these children would fall at varying points on a continuum. At one end of the continuum are the monolingual speakers of the first language (L_1). Then we have the dominant-L_1 speakers who have some English ability. In the middle of the continuum are the apparently bilingual students with comparable proficiency in both languages. Many of our exceptional students fall within the middle of this continuum as "semilinguals." A child defined as a semilingual is a child who is displaying equally poor ability in both languages. This kind of student is unable to perform cognitive tasks in either language. According to Cummins (1976), the threshold level of language development needed to function academically has not been reached by this child. Next on the continuum are the English-dominant students with some L_1 ability. Finally there are the monolingual-English students.

Although categorical definitions have often served to label students, isolate them, and deny them equal access to educational programs, a brief description of each of the major categories is useful.

The first widely used category is that of mental retardation. According to the American Association of Mental Deficiency (AAMD):

> Mental retardation refers to signficantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period. (Grossman, 1977)

In this definition, "intellectual functioning" refers to results of individual intelligence tests and "significantly sub-average" refers to an IQ score more than two standard deviations below the mean. "Adaptive behavior" refers to the degree to which the individual meets personal independence and social responsibility expected of his or her age and cultural group (Grossman, 1977).

The socioeconomic and cultural and linguistic bias of standardized tests, particularly IQ tests, has led to questioning the value of using these tools with limited-English-proficient students as well as with other cultural and linguistic minority students (Cole, 1981; Laosa, 1977; Oakland & Matuszek, 1977; Olmedo, 1981).

Mercer (1973) discovered that of those persons who would have been labeled mentally retarded if their classification depended solely on test scores, a full 84% had completed eight grades or more in school, 83% had held a job, 80% were financially independent or housewives, and almost 100% were able to do their own shopping or travel alone.

Culturally and linguistically different students are most affected by the process of standardized testing. Unfamiliar test content, attitudes of examiners who may be unfamiliar with the child's culture, the students' limited proficiency in English, language variations, unfamiliarity with test conditions, and lack of motivation to perform well on the test are all critical factors that influence a student's performance on standardized tests. Therefore, the label "mentally retarded," traditionally arrived at through intelligence tests, is a very misused classification with linguistic, cultural, and racial minority students.

A second exceptional category is the behaviorally disordered. According to Rhodes and Tracy (as cited in Ambert & Dew, 1982), characteristics of behaviorally disordered students fall into two categories: hyperactive-aggressive and fearful-withdrawn. Some characteristics that appear in many definitions include an inability to learn that cannot be explained by other factors, difficulty in relating to others, inappropriate behavior under normal circumstances, general unhappiness, and development of physical symptoms for personal issues (Ambert & Dew, 1982).

Linguistic minority students, particularly recent immigrants, may undergo extreme stress and culture shock and may exhibit, temporarily, signs of behavior disorders. In addition, culturally different students, who may be behaving appropriately for their own cultural groups, may be seen as behaving abnormally in this society's context and may be erroneously labeled as emotionally or behaviorally disordered. On the other hand, linguistic minority students exhibiting extreme signs of emotional disorders may not be identified because their behavior may be explained away in terms of cultural differences.

A third category, that of learning disabled, is defined in P.L. 94-142 as:

> Specific L-D means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using a language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do math calculations. The term learning disabled does not refer to students who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps or mentally retarded or culturally, educationally or economically disadvantaged.

In contrast to the federal definition of learning disabilities, Mercer (1973) discovered that in 42 state departments of education, the definition of learning disabilities resulting primarily from environmental "disadvantages" were excluded in only 55% of the regulations. Current definitions, in many state regulations, do not clearly indicate that culturally different children who lack English skills should be excluded from being labeled LD (Gonzales & Ortiz, 1977).

Linguistic minority students who have not reached the level of English necessary to perform cognitive tasks are often misclassified as learning disabled. A misconception exists that if a student has achieved enough language to communicate but is not able to use that language in order to perform more difficult cognitive tasks, then that student must be learning disabled (Cummins, 1976; Duncan & DeAvila, 1979).

According to Cummins (1976) the "threshold level of competence" in each of the child's languages must be determined in order to determine which language should be used to instruct the child. If all other factors are considered equal, the child should be taught in his or her strongest language. Cummins warns against educators demanding that linguistic minority students use English in order to learn when the student has not had the amount of time necessary to develop the level of English language needed to cognitively handle the content. According to Cummins, it takes approximately 5 years for a student to develop a language to a point where he or she can completely function in that language. Therefore, a student asked to perform in a language that he or she has not yet fully developed will perform poorly and can be erroneously classified as LD (Cummins, 1980).

A fifth category comprises communication disorders. When assessing linguistic minority students, the students must be assessed in two languages and findings must be interpreted across language.

Developmental errors made by second language learners in syntax, articulation, and vocabulary are often wrongly labeled as symptomatic of a communication disorder (Ambert & Dew, 1982). The child whose language use should be categorized as different because he or she is developing within the norm and also is acquiring another language or a variety of the same language is often misdiagnosed as having a disorder.

Disorders such as those of hearing and vision and other physical disorders are often undetected in linguistic minority students. For example, according to specialists of the hearing impaired (Fischgrund, 1980), there is a high incidence of hearing loss among Portuguese students that has gone undetected. If linguistic minority students who have physical disorders can be identified, then many of these students can, with minimal remediation, remain in a regular classroom.

A final category which is considered in some states to be included in the definition of exceptional education is giftedness. However, P.L. 94-142 does not consider the gifted child as exceptional.

The most recent definition used is found in Federal Law Section 904 of the Gifted and Talented Children's Act of 1978 which states:

> Gifted and talented children means children who are identified at the preschool, elementary or secondary levels as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of high performance capabilities in areas such as intellectual creative, special academic, or leadership ability, or in performing and visual arts, and who by reason thereof, require services or activities not ordinarily provided by schools.

There are many lists of subjective descriptors thought to define gifted children. The problem is that most linguistic minority students do not gain access to gifted programs because of biased identification procedures, evaluators, and programs lacking bilingual personnel on staff (Ambert & Dew, 1982).

SAFEGUARDING LINGUISTIC MINORITIES IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

It was not until the civil rights movement of the 1960's that the needs of ethnolinguistic groups began to be recognized in this country. Since then, however, there have been legislative, executive, and judicial actions on behalf of ethnic minorities. On the legislative level, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any federally funded program. Therefore, any school system could be found guilty by the Office of Civil Rights of discriminating against culturally and linguistically different students if that system denies equal access to this population of students. Furthermore, the Bilingual Education Acts (1968, 1974, and 1979), Title IX of the Civil Rights Act (1972), Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, the Equal Education Opportunity Act (1974), and P.L. 94-142 (Education of the Handicapped Act) provide additional legislative protections for linguistically and culturally different students.

On the executive level, the Office of Civil Rights issued both the Federal Lau Remedies (1975) and the well known May 25th O.C.R. Memorandum (1975). The Federal Lau Remedies was the result of the Lau v. Nichols (1974) Supreme Court decision which clearly established the fact that a school cannot claim to provide equal access to limited-English-proficient students by providing them with the same services provided to other children. The decision rendered in the Lau v. Nichols case was on behalf of Chinese students' rights to have support services in their language and in English as a second language. The United States Supreme Court stated that "there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum, for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education." The Lau Remedies demand a transitional bilingual program for all limited-English-proficient students, including

those with "disabilities." Specifically, the remedies require that a district implement a systematic procedure for identifying numbers of LEP students in a system, assess the relative language dominance of students in their native language and in English, and provide an appropriate instruction program which would ensure educational opportunity.

The May 25th O.C.R. Memorandum (1975) addressed the issue of inappropriate placement of minority students in special education classes. The memorandum specifically stated that "School districts must not assign national origin, minority group students to classes for the mentally retarded on the basis of criteria which essentially measure or evaluate English language skills."

As a result of the 1970 memorandum, a Task Force was formed by the Director of the Office of Civil Rights. This Task Force consisted of Puerto Rican and Mexican-American educators, social scientists, and community leaders who developed monitoring strategies and recommendations addressing the assessment and placement of minority students in classes for the handicapped (Bergin, 1980).

At the judicial level, the fact that a student's linguistic or cultural difference cannot be used to label a child as "exceptional" or "disabled" has been clearly established in several cases in state courts.

These include: Diana v. The State Board of Education (California, 1973); Larry P. v. Wilson Rites, Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of California (California, 1979); and Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School Children, et al. v. Ann Arbor School District Board, F. Supp. 1371 ED (Michigan, 1979).

In Jose P. et al. v. Gordon M. Ambach et al. (New York, 1979) a New York court mandated that the New York City Board of Education evaluate students in their native language or by whatever means a student is able to communicate.

In Lora v. Board of Education of the City of New York, 455 F. Supp. 1211 (1977), the court asserted that the over-representation of minority students in special education classes violated the rights of minority students.

The Guadalupe v. Tempe Elementary School District case (1971) also raised the issue of the improper use of standardized intelligence tests to place students in classes for the mentally retarded. According to Bergin (1980), an out-of-court settlement of the Guadalupe case provided many of the same provisions agreed to in the Diana case (which involved the misclassification of Mexican Americans in classes for the mentally retarded). In the Guadalupe case, the recognition of disproportionate numbers of Mexican-American and Yaqui Indians in classes for the mentally retarded led to provisions to limit that number systematically, within a limited period of time.

The above court decisions have been based on the guaranteed provisions of P.L. 94-142 (The Education for all Handicapped Children Act), which guarantee educational rights for all exceptional children. A most important provision in this act entails that "handicapped" children receive a free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. Specifically, the provision that a student has the right to be assessed in his or her dominant language and that parents have a right to be communicated with in their home language helps safeguard the rights of linguistic and cultural minorities.

Nevertheless, misclassification and misplacement of linguistic minority students still continues despite P.L. 94-142 safeguards, other legislative mandates, and numerous court cases. According to Bergin (1980), at the time of the Lau Remedies (1975) bilingual teachers began to complain about the rising numbers of exceptional students being placed in bilingual classrooms rather than in special education. The reasons given for this under-representation of linguistic minority exceptional students in special education classes were the inappropriate assessment instruments and the lack of bilingual special education teaching staff and materials. According to Landurand (1981), less than 5% of all limited-English-proficient students enrolled in bilingual programs were evaluated and identified as exceptional. A further research investigation by Nuttall and Landurand (1984) of 20 school districts in the U.S. revealed that a substantially smaller percentage of limited-English-proficient students are being identified for special education than the 12% national incidence figure for special education.

It appears that many linguistic minority students who have inadequate communicative abilities in English are not being identified and referred for special education at a rate equal to their monolingual English-speaking peers. On the other hand, linguistic minority students who have attained some level of English communicative ability are mainstreamed into regular monolingual classes, are disproportionately referred for special education services, and are over-enrolled in special education classes (Landurand, 1981).

Bias in testing has inevitably led to inappropriate placements. Mercer (1973) was the first to document this problem when she found in her Riverside study that the rate of placement for Mexican-American students in classes for the mentally retarded was four times larger than their representation in the total school enrollment. Tucker (1980), studying several school districts in the Southwest, explained the difference in proportions in enrollment as merely a relabeling from mentally retarded to learning disabled.

WHAT IS NONDISCRIMINATORY ASSESSMENT?

"Nondiscriminatory" identification and placement is basically defined by Section 612 (5) (C) 94-142 which says that in order to qualify for assistance, a state must establish appropriate procedures:

> Procedures to assure that testing and evaluation materials and procedures utilized for the purpose of evaluation and placement of handicapped children will be selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory. Such materials or procedures shall be provided and administered in the child's native language or mode of communication unless it clearly is not feasible to do so and no single procedure shall be the sole criterion for determining an appropriate educational program for a child.

In determining whether an assessment process is appropriate, the tester, the test, and the testee must all be considered as important components in this dynamic process.

The Tester

Who should test linguistically/culturally different students? All things being equal, a tester who speaks the language of the child, understands the culture of the child, and is a skilled assessor will be the best choice for the child. The examiner's knowledge of the culture of the child, either through birth or training, is also extremely important for understanding the examinee's behavior and perception of the testing situation (Plata, 1982). In addition, Oakland and Matuszek (1977) state that examiners who do not give evidence of a warm, responsive, and receptive but firm style toward minority children will not be able to establish the rapport needed for successful testing and therefore will not obtain the best performance from the child.

Because of the scarcity of native language assessors, many school systems use discriminatory testing practices. Typically, the student is given an evaluation where English language is used as the medium for testing. Because a linguistic minority student may have attained basic oral-aural English skills, it is assumed that this student can be evaluated in English; language proficiency in English and the native language is not determined before testing. Standardized instruments selected by monolingual English psychologists are selected and administered to the student. Scores are computed, even though many psychologists are aware of the irrelevancy of the norms and inappropriateness of many of the items to some children's cultural backgrounds and experience. The result is that little is learned about the child's level of functioning and misclassification is quite likely to occur.

A second common evaluative approach involves a situation where a linguistic minority student, referred for an evaluation, is obviously of limited English proficiency. The school psychologists attempt to evaluate the student with the help of an interpreter. The interpreter is given no training in administering tests. The psychologist is unaware of the accuracy of the interpreted question. The standardized instruments used still contain inappropriate items and still have not been normed on

this population. Other potential problems in using interpreters are as follows:

1. The interpreter may not be equally fluent in both languages and may translate incorrectly to the child or to the tester.

2. The interpreter may identify with the child and subconsciously prompt the right responses nonverbally or through other cues.

3. Interpreters are usually not trained or familiar with the principles of test administration, human development, and human relations.

4. Interpreters who are of different social class, race, or ethnic group may be negatively disposed towards the child even though they speak the same language. Because of these and other pitfalls, school systems should either try to avoid using interpreters or to develop special programs to train them (Nuttall & Landurand, 1984).

A third current evaluation practice is to have a limited-English-proficient student evaluated by a bilingual psychologist, who may be unfamiliar with the child's cultural background. Other school personnel, unable to speak the student's language, delegate to the bilingual psychologist total responsibility for evaluating the student and recommending a placement. This practice is risky because the psychologist may be insensitive to the child's cultural background, and/or may also be a poor assessor.

A fourth approach involves a sensitive bilingual psychologist, who understands the limited-English-proficient student and his or her culture and understands how to use evaluation instruments cautiously. The evaluator relies on a multidisciplinary approach to assessment and gathers relevant information about the child from many sources. The results, in this case, will probably be a more accurate assessment of the child's abilities and weaknesses and a more appropriate placement for the child.

The Testee

The child's level of English proficiency, the attitude of the child being tested, and the behavior of the child taking the test all influence the child's performance and the way that performance is interpreted by the tester. The behavior of children during a testing situation is dependent on many factors. The way their culture defines learning, their past experiences with test taking, whether they were reared in a cooperative or competitive environment (Pepitone, 1980), their cognitive style (Castenada & Ramirez, 1974), and their cultural values are all major factors in determining a child's performance on standardized instruments. A child whose culture does not value "time" in the same way as Euro-American middle-class culture will not respond to "timed tests" in the same way as many middle-class Euro-American children. A child who exists in a cooperative learning environment will appear unmotivated in a

competitive test-taking environment. In addition, a child who is primarily field-sensitive in his or her relationship to adults and to instructional material will have difficulty responding to a formal situation demanding formal task performance with an impersonal adult. An assessor who understands the cognitive, perceptual, and interactional behaviors of the student can adapt technique and procedures in order to establish the rapport that is necessary for the ethnolinguistic minority student to perform at optimum level.

The Test

The literature on nondiscriminatory assessment has focused primarily on the biases of standardized instruments. Tests have been criticized for "item bias" and improper standardization. Tests used in American schools are generally written by middle-class individuals and reflect an Anglo conformity ideology typical of that class level and culture (Mercer, 1979). Not only do the content items reflect Euro-American middle-class experiences, but values such as competitiveness and emphasis on time also reflect Euro-American middle-class culture. Ethnolinguistic minority students who have not experienced these values and have not learned this content obviously are at a disadvantage in taking these standardized tests.

In addition to item bias, most tests used in the United States are normed on the majority population. Even when tests claim to have included minorities in their standardization population, minorities are included in such small ratios that the results are insignificant in influencing the standardization results.

Furthermore, the interpretation of test scores is of critical importance especially when a culturally or linguistically different student is concerned. The assessor needs to probe further as to the possible reasons for the student's low score. Was the test administered to a limited-English-proficient student in English? Does the student speak a nonstandard dialect and was the test given using a standard native dialect? Was the child unfamiliar with skills needed to take the test? Many questions need to be answered before making any interpretations about the student's performance.

ELIMINATING OR REDUCING BIAS IN TESTING

A widely used approach in testing limited-English-proficient students is to translate and/or adapt standardized tests. This approach implies direct or written translations, weighing the nonverbal portion more heavily than the verbal and varying the speed and power components of the test (Mercer, 1979). The advantages are that this approach is easier than developing new tests. In addition, children's scores improve when given the test in their native languages (Nuttall & Landurand, 1984). Nevertheless, this approach presents many problems. Standardized translated versions of tests do not take into account the many regional dialects spoken by students (Plata, 1982; DeAvila & Havassy, 1974a). In

addition, words do not have the same meaning when translated. Words in one language may not have the same frequency of use in a second language (DeAvila & Havassy, 1974b). Therefore, a word that may be considered very basic in a child's second language may be a very difficult or nonexistent word from the perspective of the child's first language. In addition, the content still reflects American middle-class culture (Mercer, 1979; Plata, 1982).

A second approach used is to establish ethnic norms. The intention in developing ethnic norms is to compensate ethnic minority students for their "deprivation." Ethnic norms are problematic in that they have the potential for encouraging lower expectations for minorities. A second problem in this approach is that it does not provide educators with any accurate diagnostic information needed for educational programming. Instead, it may lead to false comparisons between different ethnolinguistic groups. A further problem with establishing ethnic norms is the reinforcement of a false assumption that groups are ethnically homogeneous. Use of ethnic norms will encourage the tendency to assume that lower scores are ultimately indicative of lower potential, thereby contributing to the self-fulfilling prophecy of lower expectations for minorities as well as reinforcing the genetic inferiority argument proposed by Jensen (Jensen & Rosenfeld, 1974) and others.

A third attempt to respond to criticism of standard IQ tests is to create culture-fair tests. Under the category of culture-fair tests are: the common culture approach, the learning potential approach, and the neo-Piagetian approach.

According to Nuttall (Nuttall & Landurand, 1981) the common culture approach employs the use of problems or tasks that are equally familiar or unfamiliar to people in most cultures. These tests tend to be nonverbal, performance oriented, symbolic responses to relationships among figures or designs. The advantages of this approach are that it is economical and can be applied to all groups. Some of these tests minimize dependence on verbal ability (Cervantes, 1974), speed, item content, and test wiseness (Mick, 1982).

This approach has been widely criticized for many reasons. Mercer (1979) and Oakland and Matuszek (1977) contend that this approach is unable to yield similar means and standard deviations for different racial groups and social classes. Mercer (1979) further criticizes this approach for its nonpredictability of academic performance. Mick (1982) points out that several of these tests, for example, the Raven's, require formal skills learned only in a school situation. Oakland and Matuszek (1977) criticize the fact that his approach does not assess important psychological characteristics. Some common tests which fall within the common culture approach are Cattell's Culture Fair Tests for measuring intelligence, Raven's Progressive Matrices (1960), Goodenough Draw-A-Man Test, Leiter International Performance Scale (1966), and Bender-Gestalt Visual Motor Test (1938).

A second approach in the category of developing culture-fair tests is the learning potential approach. In this approach, children are pre- and

posttested on a nonverbal reasoning test such as the Ravens. Between tests they are trained to process the test. The difference between the first score and the score after training represents the child's learning potential. Proponents of this approach contend that it gives a measure of the child's ability to learn. Budoff (1976) claims that it predicts nonverbal learning performance in school. Opponents of this approach claim that it is extremely time-consuming, that test data is limited to nonverbal areas, and that it does not predict future academic performance (Mercer, 1979).

An example of the learning potential approach is Raven's Progressive Matrices using a test-train-retest paradigm of Budoff (1974).

A third approach within the category of culture-fair test is the neo-Piagetian approach. This approach consists of applying neo-Piagetian measures to determine cognitive development. According to DeAvila and Havassy (1974b), scores on tests taken in English, Spanish, or bilingually showed no appreciable differences. Performance of Mexican and American samples both were within expected limits of cognitive development for given chronological ages. No ethnic differences were found.

Opponents of this approach cite the following disadvantages: the ability to predict academic performance is unknown, because many school systems do not organize their curricula according to developmental states; the practical uses of this test are limited; and Piagetian cognitive theory is difficult for teachers and parents to understand.

Examples of this approach (Nuttall & Landurand, 1984) are the Piagetian measure developed by DeAvila and Struthers, including Cartoon Conservation Scales. Measures are computerized to give information and recommendation to parents, teachers, and administrators through a system called PAPI (Program Assessment Pupil Interaction) (DeAvila & Havassy, 1974a).

A fourth approach to diminish discrimination in assessment is the creation of culture-specific tests. These are specific tests designed for each major American microcultural group (Laosa, 1977). The advantage of this approach is that it allows the child to be assessed at his or her level of functioning relative to expectations of his or her family and subculture (Mercer, 1979). This approach further highlights the fact that test performance is highly dependent upon the degree to which the test reflects the test taker's own culture. There are several criticisms of this approach. It is impossible to construct tests for every microculture. In addition, a student's performance on these tests does not predict the child's ability to function in relation to American core culture (Mercer, 1979). Examples of culture-specific tests are: Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity (BITCH-100). This test includes 100 multiple choice vocabulary items which deal exclusively with Black culture. However, since the vocabulary list was chosen from the dictionary of American slang, it is probably biased against middle-class Blacks.

A second test, the Enchilada Test, contains 31 multiple choice items which deal with Mexican-American barrio life. These tests, which are designed for a specific ethnic microcultural group, may not be appropriate for use with those individuals who may be acculturated into the dominant society.

A fifth approach is Mercer's multipluralistic approach. This approach uses parent interview and student testing in comprehensive assessment of the whole child (including medical, sociocultural, intellectual, and behavioral aspects). This approach develops multiple normative frameworks for sociocultural, socioeconomic, racial-ethnic, and geographic groups. A student's estimated learning potential is computed by comparing his or her score with the average score for persons from similar backgrounds.

The SOMPA (System of Multi Pluralistic Assessment) has advantages and disadvantages. It provides comprehensive information to classify a child. Another claimed advantage is that it is easier to renorm existing tests and obtain information from parents than to develop new unbiased tests (Nuttall, 1979). However, SOMPA has been heavily criticized. Some major criticisms include the following: the validity of the SOMPA is just beginning to be established (Nuttall, 1979); lack of national norms is a major drawback (Nuttall, 1979); the length of the battery makes it impractical for routine use (Plata, 1982); the estimated learning potential does not predict achievement (Oakland & Matuszek, 1977). Because the estimated learning potential is designed to predict how well a student could perform in an optimum socioculturally pluralistic learning environment, and because very few of those environments actually exist, the estimated learning potential becomes educationally useless for purposes of educational planning and programming. An additional two criticisms of the SOMPA are that some minorities find the "regression formula" concept demeaning. The process of adding points to a student's score because of the student's sociocultural background is viewed by some minorities as more harmful than helpful. In addition, SOMPA does not provide useful diagnostic information to program for the child.

A sixth approach is a task analysis approach. In this approach the tester analyzes the skills and behavior required to answer each test item and determines why the child does not respond correctly. The child is then trained in the areas of weakness and retested (Kaufman, 1977). Because emphasis is on the mastery of content, the advantage of this approach is that children are treated as individuals and not compared to others. In addition, treatment is an integral part of the task analysis model. The model is essentially a test-teach-test approach (Mercer & Ysseldyke, 1977). A criticism of this approach is that some of the methods of analyzing the tasks can become difficult as tasks become complex (Kaufman, 1977). Another criticism is that this approach has been used mostly in academic achievement areas. Examples of this approach are the Key Math Test and the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test. According to Nuttall et al. (1983), exponents include Kaufman (1977), Resnick, Wang, and Kaplan (1973), Gold (1972), and Bijou (1970).

A seventh approach is criterion-referenced tests. Unlike norm-referenced tests, criterion-referenced measures are used to compare an individual with established criteria or performance standards, and not with other individuals (Popham & Husek, 1969). A strength in this method is that it evaluates a child on clearly specified educational tasks (Mowder, 1980) and is directly interpretable in terms of specific standards (Oakland & Matuszek, 1977). There are several cited disadvantages to this approach; for example, reliability and validity are difficult to ascertain and cultural biases are hard to eliminate (Oakland & Matuszek, 1977).

A second criticism is that selecting appropriate behavioral objectives and criteria can prove to be both difficult and time consuming (Laosa, 1977).

A third criticism is that the tendency to use these tests to establish standards of excellence or desirable educational goals should be avoided (Oakland & Matuszek, 1977). An example of this approach is SOBER-Espanol, which provides comprehensive evaluation for Spanish reading (Nuttall, 1979).

An eighth and final approach is the global approach to test bias. In this approach, nonbiased assessment is viewed as a process rather than a set of instruments. Multifactored assessment values language dominance, adaptive behavior, and sociocultural background (Reschly, 1978). Every step in the assessment process is evaluated as a possible source of bias (Tucker, 1980). The advantage of this approach is that it is the most comprehensive and realistic approach so far developed to aid the practitioner in identifying the sources of bias operating in the assessment system. The disadvantages in this approach are that it underestimates the role of content bias of tests, it is too time consuming and it does not guarantee eliminating bias. Examples of this approach include the Guide for Non-biased Assessment (NRRC, 1976) and Tucker's (1980) Nineteen Steps for Assuring Non-biased Placement of Students in Special Education.

Based on the author's experience with local school assessment procedures in relation to limited-English-proficient students, the global approach to assessment is highly preferred as a necessary first step in assessing any student. Other approaches, such as criterion-referenced, task-analysis, and test-train-retest models need to be pursued, particularly with the LEP population.

COMMON ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Several surveys (Bogatz, 1978; Coulopolous & De George, 1982; Mick, 1982; Morris, 1977) have described the testing practices used by school personnel to assess limited-English-proficient children.

In a 1977 survey of 12 large school systems (in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Nevada, and Texas), Morris found that the

four tests most commonly used were the Bender-Gestalt Test, Draw-A-Person, Leiter International Performance Scale, and Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-English version). The first three of these tests fit in the common culture approach to diminishing bias because they involve less reliance on verbal skills than some other approaches.

According to Nuttall et al. (1983), 5 years later when Coulopolous and De George surveyed 21 school psychologists in Massachusetts, they found that the four most frequently used tests were the same ones obtained by Morris, even though other instruments and approaches were available. The study found that English-speaking psychologists administered the tests using interpreters, pantomime, or whatever amount of English the child had mastered.

In the largest study of all, Mick (1982) surveyed 157 administrators of special education in four states (Texas, New Mexico, Florida, and Massachusetts) and two cities (Philadelphia and New York). She reported her results in terms of assessment "modifications" for bilingual (Hispanic) students rather then in terms of specific tests used. However, Mick reported that nonverbal subscales were frequently used. Criterion-referenced tests, pluralistic assessments, and culture-fair tests were used only occasionally. The most frequent modification cited was the use of language proficiency tests. Modifications used only occasionally included matching the examiner to the examinee, observing the child in the classroom, and using interpreters. Testers seldom attempted to improve the child's test-taking skills or to use local ethnic norms (Nuttall, 1983).

In the 21 school systems surveyed in the Nuttall and Landurand report (1984) to the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA), the most frequently used testing approaches were the common-culture approach and adaptations/translations of existing tests. None of the systems reported using the culture-specific approach or the global approach. Seven of the 21 systems reported using the multipluralistic approach in total or in selected parts, mainly the adaptive battery (ABTC).

ARE THERE VIABLE ALTERNATIVE COMPREHENSIVE CROSS-CULTURAL APPROACHES?

After reviewing the research in the assessment of linguistically culturally different students, this author contends that of the approaches presented, the <u>global approach to test bias</u> offers the most promise because of its emphasis on the process of evaluation. In addition, for each child from a linguistic minority background, a multidisciplinary assessment team should be composed. This team should include at least one person who speaks the child's language and is familiar with the child's culture and one person experienced in bilingual education, preferably in the child's language.

Prior to conducting any assessments, a determination of the child's level of proficiency in both the native language and in English must be made. Care should be taken in selecting instruments that claim to test proficiency. Both oral and written proficiency must be determined. In cases where there are no instruments to test proficiency in a child's native language, an informal assessment approach needs to be developed to make this information available.

The child should be observed by the assessment team in a variety of settings, including the classroom. The child's functioning in each of these settings should be described.

A team member thoroughly knowledgeable about the child's culture and language should prepare a home survey after visiting the child in the home setting. This team member should ascertain not only the child's educational background, but what language(s) the family normally speaks, what language(s) is spoken in the neighborhood, and what exposure the child has had to the English-speaking core culture. Information about the child's previous history and experience is critical in cross-cultural assessment.

A medical examination is an important aspect of cross-cultural assessment. Often, linguistically and culturally different students are placed in restrictive special education settings when their problem(s) could easily have been corrected by eyeglasses, hearing aids, or other physical devices. Many physical problems which can be easily rectified go undetected because the child does not receive a medical examination.

A fourth area of assessment which is often overlooked when working with linguistic minority students is the educational assessment component. At minimum, reading and math diagnostic assessments must be conducted in both the native language and English. It is not enough to know that a 10-year-old child is performing in English at a second-grade level. What specific skills does the child display in both languages? In which specific areas does the child display skills in one language? In which specific areas does the child display a lack of skills in both languages?

Instruments such as Key Math Diagnostic and Woodcock-Johnson may be helpful in determining the child's academic achievement status. Informal reading and math inventories in the native languages of LEP students must be developed. This requires native-language speakers, preferably those who understand the child's educational background, and skilled educational diagnosticians.

All assessments should focus on determining how the child functions both socially and cognitively in both English and the native language. Therefore, all procedures and techniques should be administered by an appropriately qualified professional who is familiar with the child's culture and who speaks the child's language. If, after every attempt has been made, there is no appropriately qualified professional to conduct these assessments, then an interpreter needs to be sought and trained to work skillfully with the monolingual assessor. Cross-training and teaming needs to occur between interpreter and monolingual assessor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The area of providing appropriate assessment for children from linguistic minorities is plagued by a general lack of information. Many local districts and states do not presently collect data on these children. Data should be collected on numbers of children in particular language groups in various monolingual regular, bilingual, and special education programs. Available data should be collected on the number of children from linguistic minorities who have limited communication skills in English, according to language group. Specific information is needed on linguistic minorities who have educational handicapping conditions according to category of handicap, type of placement, and language group. Of this group of linguistic minorities, a breakdown of limited-English-proficient students by handicap and placement is needed. It is very important that the Office of Education require that states request this information from local districts. Information of this nature should be coordinated, interpreted, and disseminated.

The development of an effective system to collect, analyze, and disseminate data about linguistic minority children is an important first step toward a better understanding of the problem (Nuttall & Landurand, 1984, p. 11).

Considering the high risk of inappropriate educational placements for linguistic minority children, it is critical that bilingual and special education programs work closely together. In many states, bilingual special education programs are nonexistent or not defined clearly. There is an overall lack of coordination at federal, state, and local levels. Because of this lack of coordination, inappropriate assessment procedures and placements continue to occur. Staff should be assigned at the local and state level to coordinate and monitor assessment, placement, and programming of linguistic minority students. Once this coordination is in place, then areas such as developing standards for assessors in competency in the language and guidelines for use of interpreters in assessment of limited-English-proficient children can be addressed.

A third area of critical need is the scarcity of training personnel. A major need cited by bilingual and special education directors in 20 states is for bilingual certified assessors and specialists to serve linguistic minority exceptional students. Many states have no guidelines for determining many levels of linguistic competency for those professionals assessing children from linguistic minority groups.

A third recommendation is that the Office of Education assume a leadership position in addressing training needs in bilingual special education. The Office of Special Education should require that state agencies, in their comprehensive system of personnel development, address the issue of staff development in bilingual special education. Funds should be appropriated in this area. The development of a cadre of trained personnel must be addressed.

Research in this area is needed in order to determine the best methods of assessing the targeted children. The effect of a child's

cognitive style on performance is one area among many that needs further research. The Office of Education should, through requests for proposals, encourage needed research in the area of cross-cultural assessment.

As stated throughout this paper, current assessment practices result in inappropriate placements for children of minority ethnolinguistic backgrounds. At present, assessment of children from linguistic minorities is often conducted in English, if the child understands the language at all. If not, assessments are conducted through an interpreter, who may have little if any knowledge of assessment. The reliance on inappropriate instruments continues. A comprehensive system of assessment for ethnolinguistic children should be developed. This system should encompass at the state level a development of policies and a means of monitoring the implementation of these guidelines at the local level.

Cross-cultural assessment is an area plagued with problems, problems stemming from lack of administrative coordination, lack of trained personnel who speak minority languages, lack of descriptive data, lack of clearly articulated guidelines and procedures, and lack of research. If linguistic minority students are to receive appropriate assessments, placements, and programs, emphasis must be placed on addressing the above areas and not on finding the appropriate tests. There will never be a test or tests constructed to solve all the problem(s) in cross-cultural assessment. The minority ethnolinguistic child needs to be understood and described in his or her cultural and linguistic context at home, in the community, and at school. A well-articulated, creative, comprehensive cross-cultural approach is needed in order to do this. Can we meet this need--this challenge?

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